

# Kansas City Region Fatality Report

## White Paper

### **Purpose and Introduction**

This white paper was developed as a companion to the quarterly fatality reports produced by MARC staff on behalf of Destination Safe, the regional transportation safety coalition. This document provides guidance on how to read and interpret the information presented in the quarterly fatality report.

Archives of these reports are available online at

<http://www.marc.org/transportation/safety/regionaldata.htm>.

### **Contents**

#### ***First Page***

The first page of the report is an unnumbered title page, including the Destination Safe logo, the name of the document, the dates covered by the report, and logos for the partnering agencies, KDOT and MoDOT.

#### ***Second Page***

The second page of the report is an unnumbered page with a map of the 12-county region served by Destination Safe. Fatal crashes are represented on the map with small squares on the location where the fatal crash occurred. Squares are colored according to which quarter of the current calendar year they occurred during. Occasionally, the immediately available fatality data does not contain enough information to properly geo-locate the crash. In these cases, the crash is not shown on the map, but fatalities that occurred during the crash are counted in the box below the map, which shows the number of fatalities that were mapped, the number that could not be mapped, and the total number of fatalities (a sum of the mapped and unmapped fatalities). It should be noted that the squares on the map represent fatal crashes, and if more than one fatality occurred as a result of a single crash, all related fatalities are represented by a single square at the crash location.

Each county on the map is color-coded by the percent change in crashes from the five-year average to the current year-to-date totals. For example, a 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter report would compare the number of fatalities that occurred in the first 9 months of the current year to the average number of crashes that occurred during the first nine months of the previous five years.

This page also notes restrictions on sharing the data contained on the map, and indicates that the data shown is preliminary as final crash data from the reporting agencies may not be available to MARC at the time the quarterly reports are produced.

#### ***Third and Fourth Pages***

The third page of the report is labeled as Page 1 of 3 on the top of the page. This is where the tabular analysis of the crash data begins.

The first section, **State Fatalities**, shows a table of the roadway fatalities to date for both Kansas and Missouri for the current year and the previous year. For example, if the report is for the second quarter, the numbers shown in the table would be the number of fatalities in each state from January through June of the current year, and January through June of the previous year. The percent change from the previous to current year is also shown in this table. A negative change indicates a decrease in fatalities, while a positive change indicates an increase.

The second section, **Kansas City Region Fatalities**, shows a graph of the roadway fatalities to date for the 12-county Destination Safe region for the current year and the previous five years. For example, if the report is for the second quarter, the numbers shown in the graph would be the number of fatalities in the region from January through June of the current year, and January through June of the previous five years. In the table to the left of the graph, the target goal for fatalities as stated in the *Kansas City Regional Transportation Safety Blueprint* is shown in the top row, and the number of fatalities for the region to date is shown in the rows below, with the second and third row presenting the breakdown by state, and the fourth row, the total for the region. The fifth row shows the average number of fatalities that occurred during the time period being covered (for example, the first two quarters of the year) over the five years previous to the current year. The percent change from the average of the five previous years to current year is shown in the bottom row of the table. A negative change indicates a decrease in fatalities, while a positive change indicates an increase.

The third section, **Priority Issues**, (beginning on Page 1 of 3 and continuing on Page 2 of 3) presents the fatality data for six of the priority areas listed in the *Kansas City Regional Transportation Safety Blueprint*: unbelted motorists, aggressive drivers, impaired drivers, pedestrians, young occupants, and motorcyclists. For each of these priority areas, a graph is presented showing fatalities over the part of the year being considered (for example, a third quarter report would show the fatalities from January through September) for the five previous years and for the current year. To the left of each graph is a table showing the fatalities to date during the current year, the average of that portion of the year from the last five years, and the percent change between these two values.

**It should be noted that quarterly fatality data is often incomplete.** While the total number of fatalities is fairly accurate, data related to whether the fatality falls under one of the priority areas may not be available at the time of reporting. In general, final crash report data is available from the state agencies by mid-summer of the following year. That is, 2009 data is not complete and available until July 2010. For this reason, the number of fatalities presented for the current year, and sometimes for the previous year, is not completely accurate. For example, reports of a fatal crash reported in the newspaper may not include information about whether the occupant was wearing a seatbelt, and most likely does not indicate if aggressive driving was involved in the collision. This information can often only be gathered after the full police report becomes available. For this reason, the numbers presented for these priority areas may be considerably lower for the current (and possibly the prior) year than for previous years. While the numbers shown for the current year are not reliable, Destination Safe feels it is important to track our progress toward reducing fatalities in our priority areas as best we can. Final data is presented in orange, while preliminary data is presented in blue on each graph.

### ***Fifth Page***

The fifth page of the report is labeled as Page 3 of 3 on the top of the page. County-Level Fatalities are presented on this page. The table in the upper left-hand corner lists the counties in the region (the four Kansas counties first, followed by the eight Missouri counties) in the first column. The second column shows the percent change in the fatalities to date for the year compared to the average over the previous five years over the same months (shown in the first column of the table to the right). A negative percentage indicates a decrease in fatalities in the current year compared to the previous five years and a positive number indicates an increase. Increases are shown in red font. **It should be noted that several of the more rural counties experience only a few fatalities a year. For this reason, a change from one year to the next of only one fatality may indicate a large percentage change. Due to the random nature of fatalities, these large percent changes from year to year are expected when average yearly fatality totals are very low.** The third column shows the fatalities to date for the current year. In the table to the right, the fatalities to date for each of the previous five years are presented, along with the average of those values for each county.

In the middle of the page, the information presented at the top of the page is shown in terms of fatality rates (that is, the number of fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled). The percent change shown for each county may differ from the percent change shown in the table above because the number of miles driven in each county may have changed from one year to the next.

Finally, the graph on the bottom of the page shows fatalities by month for the region. The orange bars show the average fatalities for each month over the previous five years. The blue bars show the number of fatalities for each month of the current year.